



Saguaro National Park News Release

For Immediate Release

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March Programs Offered at Saguaro National Park

Saguaro National Park is offering a series of programs this spring that will explore the wonderful natural and cultural history of the park. Many of these programs will also celebrate the park's 75th anniversary, coming up on March 1, 2008. Join naturalists for an evening walk in the park or join a local expert for a presentation in the visitor center. Programs will be offered at both districts. There is no charge for interpretive programs, but park entrance fees apply.

On March 1st Saguaro National Park turns 75 years old! Both districts will be offering a variety of special programs and activities all day, celebrating the establishment of the park. For a listing of these March 1st programs, please contact either visitor center, visit our website at <http://www.nps.gov/sagu/planyourvisit/75th-anniversary.htm>, or see the separate news release being issued for programming on this day.

Special Programs offered at the Rincon Mountain District (Saguaro East) include:

March 2 10:00 a.m. 1933 to Today – Saguaro National Park!

Take an easy, 1 mile walk back in time to learn how and why Saguaro National Park was created. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153. ***This program will also be offered on March 9, 16, 23 and 30.***

March 4 8:30 a.m. Desert Bird Walk

Bring your binoculars and join the quest for desert birds. This easy two hour, 1 mile walk will introduce you to some of the birds that call Saguaro National Park home. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153. ***This program will also be offered on March 11, 18 and 25.***

March 4 9:00 a.m. Desert Morning Hike

Join a park naturalist for this three hour, 4 mile exploration of Saguaro National Park. Wear sturdy hiking shoes and bring water and trail snacks. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153. ***This program will also be offered on March 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 and 26.***

March 8 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Buffelgrass Weed Pull

Volunteers will work with Park staff to remove a patch of buffelgrass, an invasive non-native plant which threatens the Sonoran Desert. We will meet at the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center and then carpool to a work site near Javelina Picnic Area. Please park in the Administrative Parking Lot (first right after entering the park, follow road to the parking lot just south of visitor center parking area). Wear sturdy hiking shoes, long pants and a hat. Bring plenty of water and gloves (if you have them); tools and gloves will be provided. Following the event we will relax over snacks and beverages. Advanced reservations are recommended, so we can get a general participant count. Call 733-5187 or sign up at the visitor center!

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March 11 7:00 p.m. Star Party

Join park naturalists for an introduction to astronomy and a look at the desert night sky. Telescopes and binoculars will be available. Advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153. *Accessible*.

March 12 2:00 p.m. Sunset/Moonrise Hike

This strenuous seven hour, 7 mile hike climbs 1,100 feet into the Rincon Mountains for views of a desert sunset and a walk down under the full moon. Wear sturdy hiking boots, dress for the weather; bring a trail dinner, plenty of water and a flashlight. As space is limited, advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153. Participants will be mailed directions and more detailed program information

March 13 10:00 a.m. Prehistoric People in the Sonoran Desert

Stop by the visitor center patio and join Volunteer Walter Coe for an exploration into the prehistory of this area. You'll learn who lived here over a thousand years ago, and what they used for food, clothing and shelter. This is an on-going, informal presentation. *Accessible*. ***This program will also be offered on March 27.***

March 14 11:00 a.m. Little House on the Desert

Join "Viola Freeman" on a 1 mile, two hour walk and find out what life was like here 75 years ago. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring water. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153.

March 14 7:00 p.m. 75th Anniversary Night Walk

This year Saguaro National Park celebrates its 75th Birthday. To celebrate, the park is offering a special series of programs highlighting important park themes. Join Park Ranger Josh Boles for a 1½ hour hike through the Sonoran Desert at night and discover how important dark nights are to the plants and animals of the park. Bring water and a flashlight. As space is limited, advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5153. ***This program will also be offered on March 28.***

March 15 3:00 p.m. 75 Years at Saguaro National Park – An Illustrated History

Join Park Ranger Laura Bolyard in the visitor center auditorium for a trip down memory lane as Saguaro National Park celebrates its 75th anniversary. This presentation, which includes many historic photos, takes a look at the events that helped shape Saguaro National Park. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153. *Accessible*.

March 18 7:00 p.m. Here Come the Hummers!

Join park naturalists to learn about the hummingbirds found in the Sonoran Desert – those who live here year-round and those who will be migrating back to the area soon. This program will be held in the visitor center auditorium. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153. *Accessible*.

March 25 7:00 p.m. Saguaro National Park – The Next 75 Years

Seventy-five years ago who could have imagined that Tucson would have a population of over a million and that the borders of the park would be the borders of the town? What will the future hold for Saguaro National Park? Join a park ranger in the visitor center auditorium for this 45 minute program and find out. Advanced reservations are recommended, and can be made by calling 733-5153. *Accessible*.

Special Programs offered at the Tucson Mountain District (Saguaro West) include:

March 1 7:30 a.m. Bird Walk

Join birding guide John Higgins to see some of the twenty-five species of birds that are year-round residents of Saguaro National Park. Meet at the Red Hills Visitor Center. The group will caravan to several nearby locations. The walking is considered easy, on flat but dirt and rocky trails. Persons of all ages, with or without bird watching experience, are welcome. Participants are encouraged to bring water and sun protection, along with binoculars and bird guides if you have them. The walk usually lasts two hours. For more information call 733-5158.

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March 1 3:00 p.m. Mountain Lions and Bobcats in the Tucson Mountains – 75 Years of National Park Service Stewardship

Join Wildlife Biologist and Research Specialist Lisa Haynes, as she explains the results of several years of monitoring mountain lions and bobcats in Saguaro National Park's Tucson Mountain District. Park and area biologists are concerned as urban development, subdivisions, roads, Interstate 10 and the Central Area Project Canal surrounds the mountain range, possibly isolating the Tucson Mountain populations of both cat species from connectivity with surrounding populations. As apex carnivores, both mountain lions and bobcats are critical to ecosystem function at their respective scales. This presentation will summarize results, describe ongoing research efforts and outline strategies for human development and sustainability as they relate to the wild cats of our Sonoran Desert region. No advanced reservations are required. Accessible.

March 3 1:15 p.m. Wandering up the Wash Hike

Every Monday, at 1:15 p.m. for 1½ hours, enjoy wandering up the wash while a naturalist takes you back years to experience Saguaro's natural and cultural heritage. You'll learn some of the early mining and CCC camp history, learn about the plants that have survived in the desert for centuries, and see Petroglyphs that were carved into the rocks between AD300 and AD1450. Participants should bring plenty of water and sun protection. Closed toed shoes are recommended. We will meet on the patio of the Red Hills Visitor Center. ***This program will also be offered on March 10, 17, 24, and 31.***

March 6 10:15 a.m. Desert Sojourn

Most humans would describe the Sonoran Desert Environment as being harsh. However, for the plants and animals that live here its heaven on earth. Come along on this ¼ mile walk around the "old water hole" and find out why. The hike lasts about 1½ hours. ***This program will be offered every Thursday and Friday, March 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27 and 28.***

March 6 1:45 p.m. Signal Hill Stroll

People have lived in the Sonoran Desert area for 11,000 years. Come along on a ½ mile Ranger-guided walk to Signal Hill to view and enjoy some of the evidence people of the past have left behind. The hike lasts about 1½ hours. ***This program is offered every Thursday, March 13, 20 and 27.***

March 8 4:30 p.m. Twilight Hike

These hikes are 2 to 2½ miles and two to two and a half hours in length. They are scheduled to begin approximately one hour before sunset. The terrain is sandy, with some rock outcroppings. Some of these can be skirted, but some must be climbed. We will return to the parking area in the fading light after sunset, on an alternate trail or along a rocky old mining road. As space is limited, advanced reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5158. ***This program will also be offered on March 22.***

March 18 4:15 p.m. Sunset Hike

This hike climbs 700 feet to a ridgeline for the sunset, and descends the trail solely under the light of the moon. The hike takes three and a half to four hours, and is 3½ miles in length. Reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5158.

March 19 5:00 p.m. "Moon Take Night Make Day" Hike

This gentle, relatively flat 2½ mile hike travels up a desert wash during the transition from day to night. The hike takes approximately three hours. Reservations are required, and can be made by calling 733-5158.

March 21 7:15 p.m. "Moonrise Over the Mountain" Patio Program

Offered the night of the full moon, this campfire talk on the patio of the Red Hills Visitor Center provides a relaxing view of the full moon as it rises above the cactus forest. The program is approximately 45 minutes. Bring a lawn chair and warm clothing. No advanced reservations are required. Accessible.

Daily Programs

Both districts of Saguaro National Park offer a variety of daily patio talks, garden walks and short desert hikes, not listed above. Contact either visitor for schedules or visit us at <http://www.nps.gov/sagu/planyourvisit/things2do.htm>.

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Visitor Center Locations/Phone Numbers

Red Hills Visitor Center (Saguaro WEST)
2700 North Kinney Road
Tucson, AZ 85743

(520) 733-5158

Rincon Mountain Visitor Center (Saguaro EAST)
3693 South Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85730

(520) 733-5153

For more information about Saguaro National Park and some of its partners, Friends of Saguaro National Park and the Western National Parks Association, visit these websites:

www.nps.gov/sagu

www.friendsofsaguaro.org

www.wnpa.org